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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1767  
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH 0280  
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0080  
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DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: Somalia - Norwegian Diplomacy

Classified by PolOff Mitch Benedict for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) We met August 15 with Brynjulf Mugaas, Norwegian Counselor for Somalia, to discuss Norwegian regional diplomacy focused on Somalia. Mugaas told us he spoke at length August 14 with Ibrahim Addow (Hawiye/Haber Gedir/Sa'ad), the former "Foreign Secretary" of the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC). Indications are that the CIC, or at least the so-called moderate elements that Addow may represent, seem to have dropped insistence on a full withdrawal of Ethiopian forces as a precondition for participation in Somalia's ongoing National Reconciliation Congress (NRC) and political process and dialogue.

¶2. (C) Addow reportedly told Mugaas that with a timeline for withdrawal of Ethiopian forces he could obtain a guarantee for a ceasefire agreement. Addow claimed that neither he nor any member of the CIC received an invitation for the NRC. However, he insisted that the lack of security in Mogadishu effectively prohibits his return, and that international mediators will be required to create the security and stability necessary for genuine reconciliation. He is currently in Doha and will be traveling to Yemen next week.

¶3. (C) Mugaas departed Nairobi on August 16 for Asmara, via Dubai and Yemen, in order to engage directly with former parliamentarians (the "Free MPs") and members of the CIC. Members of the so-called Asmara Group are reportedly moving quickly to establish a consolidated political alliance as a counterweight to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the TFG-backed NRC now taking place in Mogadishu. Mugaas intends to encourage the former MPs to engage directly with the NRC process now underway in Mogadishu, and to develop a positive agenda for Somalia. Strengthening the former MPs is also viewed as a means to weaken any efforts by the CIC, particularly its more extreme elements, to dominate or control the new alliance now being formed.

¶4. (C) Mugaas opined that that we should now talk seriously with the Ethiopian government to try to convince them to pull back their forces to the city limits of Mogadishu, and to address if possible the issue of a withdrawal timeline. The Norwegians make the point that there may be little downside to testing the ability of the TFG police, in concert with the communities of Mogadishu, to provide security in the face of a partial pull back of Ethiopian forces. The Hawiye opposition reported to the International Advisory Committee (IAC) in Mogadishu last week that they now accept the TFG police as legitimate security providers. If the Ethiopians pull back to the city limits and the result is increased violence and insecurity, then they can always go back in, said Mugaas.

RANNEBERGER